

Poetry

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As I Looked Again

The photograph:
Oakland, California,
History Room; 1918 flu
epidemic; auditorium
filled with cots of people
dying! Crosscurrents
in memory...

a little girl running
our farm's meadow like
a young doe wide-eyed
startled wonderment;
eyes flooded, dark-
ringed in Argyrol,
keep flu away!

Leaning into the photograph,
swift heartbeat, the story came...

Philadelphia; my 18-year-old
cousin, hopping his bike,
delivering, door to door,
the corner druggist's medicines;
home, exhausted to bed,
doctor said, *Too late.*

He's gone. Flu, three days, dead!

1997: photograph "in time," emotion
feeling his dark curly hair
neatly arranged over a passive,
pale face, movement of the glide
into death, mine.

ESTHER BUFFLER
Portsmouth, New Hampshire

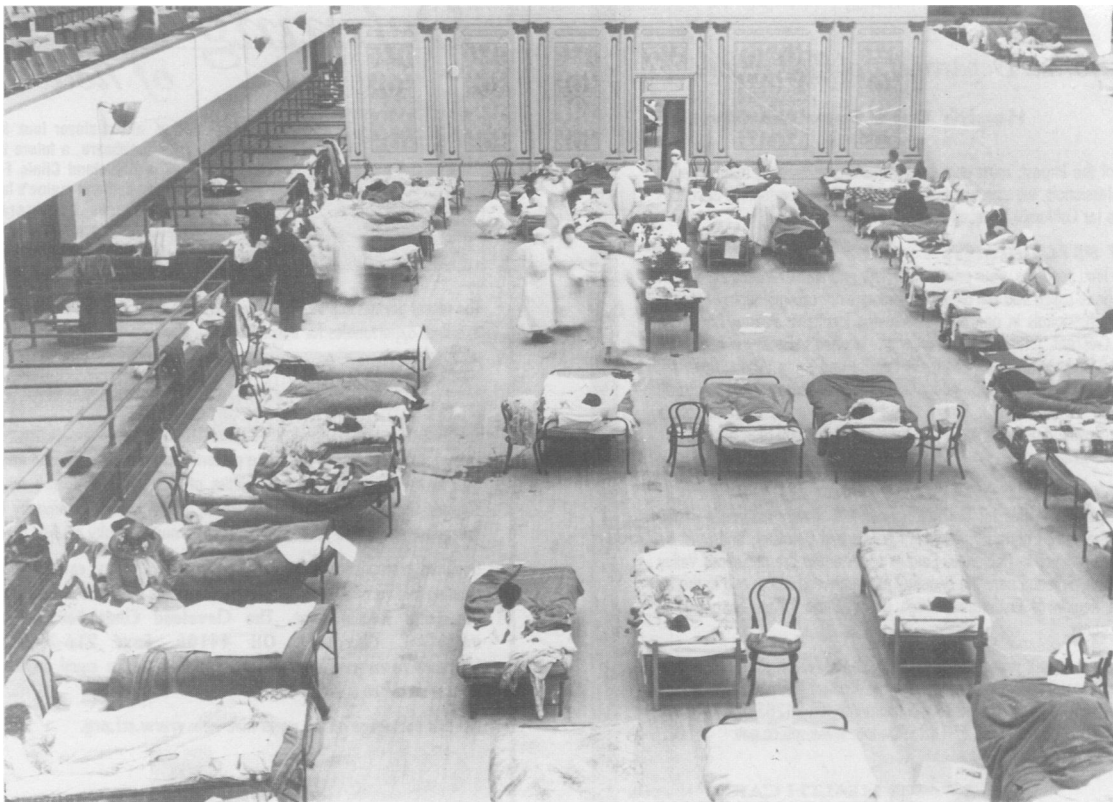


Photo Courtesy of the Historical Photograph Collection of the Oakland Public Library, Oakland, California.